

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 01573 201630Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 OMB-01 /075 W
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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3605
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USLO PEKING PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY
CINCPAC HONOLULU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L 1573

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, VM, CH
SUBJECT: REPORT OF FIGHTING ON VIETNAM-PRC BORDER

REF: (A) STATE 99382, (B) HONG KONG 4933

1. SWEDISH RADIO'S HONG KONG CORRESPONDENT, ROLF SODERBERG, BROKE STORY OF ALLEGED FULL-SCALE ARMORED FIGHTING ALONG WHOLE LENGTH OF VIETNAM-PRC BORDER. SWEDISH TV NEWS PROGRAMS HAVE FEATURED SODERBERG'S REPORTS FOR PAST TWO DAYS. SODERBERG, WHO WAS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SODER FOR DURATION OF HER STAY IN VIETNAM, QUOTES NHAN DAN'S EDITOR IN CHIEF HOANG TUNG AS CONFESSING THAT "THE SITUATION IS TENSE." TUNG ALSO REPORTEDLY TOLD SODERBERG THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE PRC ON THE SPRATLEYS AND PARACELS HAVE COLLAPSED AND THAT VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATOR HAS RETURNED HOME. WHETHER TUNG IS ALSO SOURCE OF REPORT OF SERIOUS BORDER INCIDENTS HAS NOT BEEN DIVULGED.

2. MFA SOURCE TRAVELLING WITH FM SODER INFORMED US THAT
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HE RAISED THE ISSUE IN CONVERSATION WITH SRV'S DEPUTY FM. DEPUTY FM CONFIRMED THAT BORDER SITUATION IS TENSE. WHEN ASKED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY EXCHANGE OF FIRE, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE BUT NOTED THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD BATTLED EACH OTHER WITH WOODEN STICKS (SIC). SWEDES HAVE REPORTS THAT CHINESE MAY HAVE MOVED BOUNDARY MARKERS THEREBY PROVOKING SOME BORDER SKIRMISHES. SRV DEPUTY FM

ALSO TOLD MFA SOURCE THAT CHINESE WERE CONDUCTING NAVAL MANEUVERS AROUND THE PARACELS AND THIS THE VIETNAMESE FOUND THREATENING.

3. MFA SOURCE SAID HE RAISED BORDER ISSUE WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN HANOI WHOM HE REGARDS AS PARTICULARLY KNOWLEDGEABLE. FRENCH COULD NOT FIND SUBSTANCE IN SODERBERG REPORT EITHER.

4. ON THE HEELS OF HER VISIT TO VIETNAM, FM SODER RETURNED TO PRC TO ATTEND CANTON FAIR. SWEDISH AMBASSADOR TO PRC, KAJ BJORK, WHO MET WITH MRS. SODER IN CANTON, IS QUOTED IN SWEDISH PRESS AS SAYING MRS. SODER HAD NOT RAISED THE ISSUE WITH HIM NOR HAD HE HEARD ANYTHING FROM OTHER SOURCES REGARDING SERIOUS BORDER INCIDENTS.

5. COMMENT: IN ABSENCE OF HARD FACTS OR SUPPORTING INFORMATION FROM THEIR EMBASSIES IN HANOI OR PEKING, SWEDES SEEM PERPLEXED BY SODERBERG REPORTS. NO OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE SODER PARTY WERE PRIVY TO SUCH REPORTS. MFA EXPERTS ARE FRANKLY AT A LOSS AS TO WHO SODERBERG'S SOURCE MIGHT BE. KENNEDY-MINOTT

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Message Attributes

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